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Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development

Security Council
Sixty-seventh year

Identical letters dated 24 January 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith a statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia dated 20 January 2012, in reaction to allegations recently made by the Russian Prime Minister during a meeting with journalists in Novo-Ogaryovo (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex issued as a document of the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 35.

(*Signed*) Alexander **Lomaia**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the identical letters dated 24 January 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Statement of the Georgian Foreign Ministry in reaction to allegations recently made by the Russian Prime Minister during a meeting with journalists in Novo-Ogaryovo

During a meeting held with journalists in Novo-Ogaryovo on 18 January 2012, the Russian Prime Minister and presidential candidate, Vladimir Putin, once again referred to the theme of Georgian-Russian relations.

As Mr. Putin again gave voice to now well-known propaganda clichés when referring to the 2008 war between Georgia and Russia, there is no need not to remind him of the fact that, as recently as during a meeting with Russian servicemen held in Vladikavkaz on 21 November 2011, the Russian President, Dimitri Medvedev, unequivocally confessed that the real goal of Russia's military aggression in 2008 was to hamper Georgia's efforts to integrate with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. In the light of this confession, the "assertions" Mr. Putin recently made in Novo-Ogaryovo regarding Russia's aggression make no sense at all.

The origins of the events of 2008 can be traced back over several years, a period during which Mr. Putin's role has been significant. Immediately after he came to power, Mr. Putin removed those members of the Tskhinvali government who had been conducting a fruitful dialogue with Georgia's central authorities — dialogue that could have led to the peaceful resolution of the conflict in coordination with the Georgian Government in Tbilisi — and replaced them with a separatist regime under the authority of Eduard Kokoity, a known criminal who quickly put an end to any attempt at entertaining a constructive dialogue with the Georgian authorities. Officials belonging to the Russian military and "special" agencies rapidly assumed leading positions in the Tskhinvali government alongside Mr. Kokoity, and their arrival was followed by the supply of weapons to illegal armed units under their control and the mass distribution of Russian passports to the populations of the regions of Tskhinvali and Abkhazia.

Later, the Russian Government "responded" to the West's recognition of Kosovo's independence by attempting to once and for all sever Georgia from its occupied territories. Russia began by declaring that it would no longer be bound by the terms of the 19 January 1996 decision of the Council of the Heads of State of the Commonwealth of Independent States, thus clearing the way for its intense militarization of the regions of Tskhinvali and Abkhazia. Mr. Putin then instructed the Russian Government to strengthen its ties with the two regions of Georgia with the goal of binding them more closely to Russia. This, in turn, was followed by the deployment to Abkhazia of Russian "railway troops", whose task was to ensure that railway infrastructure was adequate for the transportation of armoured vehicles throughout the region. Russia's full-scale military aggression against Georgia in 2008 was but the logical continuation of this chain of events. Besides the Tskhinvali region, Russian troops also intervened in Abkhazia without firing a single shot, a fact that leaves no doubt as to who unleashed the war in 2008 and why.

During the recent meeting in Novo-Ogaryovo, Mr. Putin expressed his "concern" over the fact that Russia would have to aim its missiles at targets in Georgia if American anti-missile systems are based in the country. He seemingly forgot that Russia already occupies 20 per cent of Georgia's territory, that Russian "Iskander" and "Tochka-U" missile systems and BM-30 "Smerch" multiple-launch rocket systems are already aimed at Georgia and that hundreds of armoured vehicles and masses of modern military equipment remain concentrated in Georgia's Russian-occupied regions. At the same time, Mr. Putin declared that he will only entertain a dialogue with Georgia's political opposition, thus rejecting outright the possibility of inter-State dialogue between Georgia and Russia.

As far as the issue regarding Grigol Chkhartishvili (Boris Akunin) is concerned, Mr. Akunin is one of the members of the newly founded League of Voters. The League has criticized the elections, which is why both it and Mr. Akunin have been criticized by Mr. Putin. The Russian writer was cynically reminded of his Georgian origins, and his position was explained by his anxieties about Georgia. According to Mr. Putin's logic, the hundreds of thousands of people rallying on the streets of Moscow and other Russian cities must also be of Georgian extraction.

Based upon the above, one may draw the conclusion that the corruption that pervades Russia (which can largely be traced back to those in Government) as well as the chaos and the instances of fraud that marked the elections to the Russian Duma have brought Russia face to face with a political crisis. In his attempts to extricate the country from this crisis, Mr. Putin seems to have fallen back upon the tried and tested method of finding an external enemy and has assigned this role, as usual, to Georgia.